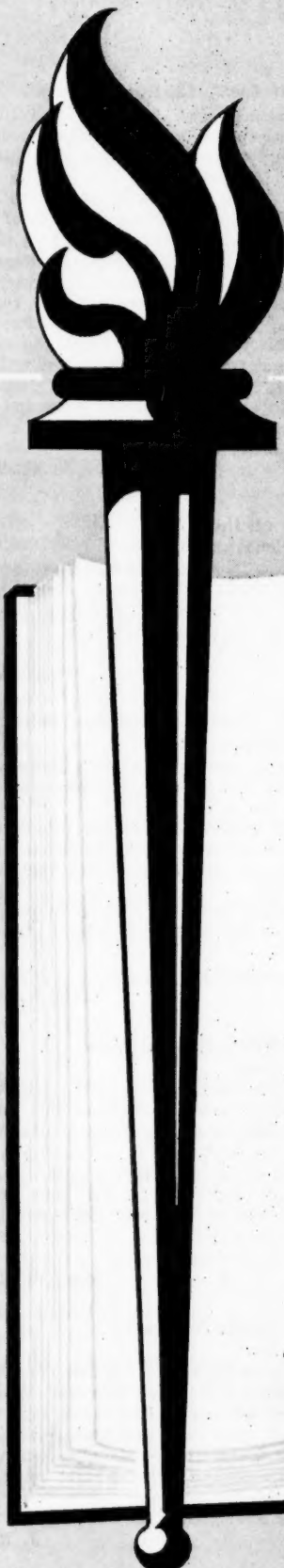


# Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



Today and Tomorrow

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

CRITICISM

PRESSING ON!

CHAIN REACTION

CLIMBING TO GREATER HEIGHTS

THANKS TO THE COMPASS

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

LYRIC OF ACTION

# Megiddo Message

Vol. 44, No. 9

May 4, 1957

Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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## LETTERS

### Light at Last—Gratitude

Dear Friends:

We feel the need to say a few words in gratitude for the precious and vital knowledge of God which we got through the medium of the MEGIDDO MESSAGE, the *Megiddo Bible Lessons*, and every book of the founder of the Megiddo Church. Last night when reading the *History of the Megiddo Mission*, I was greatly moved upon turning to the page where is the symbolic representation, "Light at Last." How impressive is this picture of this great and noble man, founder of the Megiddo Mission. Like him, we lift up our heart in thankfulness to God that we have His blessed Word and are free to walk in the wonderful light of truth.

St. Charles, Ont., Can.

C. T.

### A Light on the Road

Dear Friends:

We receive the MESSAGE regularly and enjoy its pages so very much. It seems like a light on the road of life, and helps understand the Scriptures better.

Bath, N. Y.

L. C. L.

### Much Knowledge in a Short Time

Dear Friends in Christ:

Spring is here again which brings the realization that I have been receiving the MESSAGE for a full year.

In that short space of time I have discovered many truths in the MESSAGE; much knowledge and help in understanding God's Holy Word.

So I would like it to keep on coming, as it is like a friend—having special place in my life.

Marion, Ohio

Mrs. V. R.

### Help in Life's Rugged Way

Dear Friends:

How could we live without the MESSAGE, for it brings home the Word of God every day. It helps us endure life's troubles; it lightens the darkness as we travel over life's rugged way. It helps to shun temptations of sin and surely it will keep us in the strait and narrow way until traveling days are done.

Montreal, Quebec

Mrs. M. H.

### Today's Needs Satisfied

Dear Friends:

I have read the booklet entitled *The Coming of Jesus and Elijah*. I love every line of it and wouldn't take \$10.00 for it. It is the best I have read in a long time—my Bible being first. I also like the MEGIDDO MESSAGE. It is simply packed with the right spiritual reading that we need for today.

Martins Ferry, Ohio

J. R.

## TODAY AND TOMORROW

*An address delivered by the Reverend Percy J. Thatcher at our Abib celebration, Megiddo Mission Church, April 1, 1957.*

THE words spoken by Joshua to Israel many ages in the past, come ringing down through the centuries to you and me, to a people upon whom the ends of the world have come. "And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." Forty long years had passed since Israel bade farewell to a land of darkness, delivered from bondage and the whip of their taskmasters. Their weary marches were now over, the long stretch of wilderness was behind them. They now stood before Jordan. Beyond they could view the green-capped hills of the promised land, that good land full of running brooks and springs of water, a land of wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, that Eden of rest wherein they were to eat bread without scarceness.

The river was at flood stage, a roaring torrent. Pray, what could frail man do at the swelling of Jordan? That beautiful land was now so near and yet so far. We can imagine we hear the cry that swept through the vast multitude, as they stood before that great barrier and realized their utter helplessness. Now the voice of Joshua is heard. "Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you."

Sanctification must first come this side of the great river in order to enjoy redemption and glorification forever on the other shore.

The dark night had now passed, the tomorrow had come, a never-to-be-forgotten day for Israel. Joshua commands the priests, bearing the Ark, to go before the people. As soon as their feet touched the waters, those from above rose in a heap, the lower waters flowed on and Israel passed over on dry ground into a land long foretold and promised to their fathers as an everlasting possession.

### Today — Sanctify Yourselves

Many years have passed away since the Moses of the latter days grasped the serpent down at the extremity and it turned to a rod in his hand. Obeying the command of God, he went down into Egypt to perform great spiritual miracles before the Pharaoh of spiritual darkness, causing him to let Israel pass into the wilderness and offer true and living sacrifices, pleasing to God. We heard the voice at the midnight hour, crying, "Make haste, eat your last meal in the land of darkness and let nothing remain until the morning. Eat it with your loins girded and sandals on your feet and staff in your hand." We have seen the waters of the sea of nations open up to let God's people pass through. We have seen the mighty host that would follow hard to destroy Israel come to naught. We have seen the rock smitten and spoken to in the dry and thirsty desert and the waters gush out.

Throughout all the weary marches, a cloud of witnesses has been leading by day and the fire of God's Word by

night. The bread of heaven has been falling daily that we might eat and live. We have seen rebellion, heard the murmuring and the cry for forbidden flesh for which many have returned to Egypt to eat again. We have seen the golden calf erected; spies have been sent out to search the good land. On returning, some brought a good report, and, many an evil one. Faithful ones have been laid to rest and their resting-place marked to this very day. All through the long journey the ark containing the laws and covenants has gone before. Each year, day, and hour we are drawing nearer to the swelling of Jordan. Tomorrow is coming when we shall at last reach the river's bank. Shall we be found worthy to pass through its flood waters into the Land of Promise which we with yearning hearts and eager eyes have longed to see? Not unless we have become sanctified by God's wondrous truth. When we reach the waters, they will never part for us, should our hearts and hands be defiled with sin and our feet been treading in dark and miry places. No holy one will stand there to plead our cause.

The skeptic, the higher critic, the infidel, and the unbeliever may ridicule the fact that there is a pathway that leads to a homeland of eternal joy and happiness, but never let their lack of faith have its influence; never let doubt turn us from the path the saints have trod. A traveler in Switzerland, uncertain of his way, asked a small boy by the roadside where Kan-ter-tig was, and received the most significant answer that was ever given him. "I do not know where Kan-ter-tig is," replied the boy, "but there must be a road that leads there." We may not know where Kan-ter-tig is, either, but thank God we are well acquainted with the narrow road that leads to a beautiful City whose Builder and Maker is God, and its gates are wide open to receive every weary traveler who has journeyed all the way and sanctified himself by obedience to the truth.

Neither are we like Columbus, who began his voyage from the shores of Spain and sailed across an uncharted sea; but we have the sure evidence and know without a doubt that the sea the Ship of Zion sails has another shore and we shall at last be rewarded with a vision of a new country, the earth made over new, filled with the glory of God. We, as lovers of truth, are not following some will-o'-the-wisp that leads to a dismal swamp, but to an eternal home whose light and hearth-fires burn brightly to welcome home the pilgrim who has kept his garment clean throughout the long journey.

A prominent professor once wrote, "If God exists at all, He must care for His creation; and if He cares for His creation at all, He must care for the crown of His creation." This is indeed true, and we have discovered what the crown of His creation is, a creation created in righteousness and true holiness, sanctified and purified. God cannot be just unless He is just to someone, neither can He love unless He loves someone. "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." We lift our hearts in thanksgiving that our religion is not one that cramps the cells of the intellect, but it is a mind



stretcher. The Bible does not set forth the grand purpose of God in the dry, sterile form of a creed; nor a set of hard propositions without warmth or color. It sets forth His Plan in many beautiful forms, vibrant with life throughout all its pages, teaching without ambiguity what God wants men to know, and what He wants them to do. His decree is that men shall sanctify and purify themselves that tomorrow they may behold the wonders He has prepared for them.

#### Today — Separate Yourselves from the World

We think of all the winds of doctrine let loose to play upon the earth, but with truth in the field we have no fear of the struggle. Let Truth and Falsehood grapple! Whoever heard of Truth being put to the worse in a free and open encounter!

Many people want just enough Christianity to make them respectable, and enough of the world to keep them from being odd and peculiar. This is not God's standard. He calls upon us to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works; so odd and peculiar that we are not even mentioned among the mighty throng of worshippers. He who thinks the Gospel needs to be bolstered by artificial reinforcements has not the religion once delivered to the saints. When we look over the field of so-called religion, we see something has been substituted. A religion *about* Jesus has crowded aside the religion *of* Jesus.

A prominent theologian recently wrote, "What we want today is a church that has perfect freedom. We want a high wall dividing the church from the world, but let there be three gates on every side that need not be closed, so that all may come in and out freely." But that is not the type of the church of Jesus Christ. To be sure, the high walls of salvation surround her, but there is just one entrance, and that is through a narrow door. If any man desires to enter by that door and shut the world out, the porter will open to him. The downfall of the nominal church through the ages is because she has opened her doors on all sides to let the world in and out until she has become contaminated.

The Christian need never console himself that before him all will be clear sailing. What though the tempests howl, the storms beat, the lightnings flash, the thunders roll, and the angry seas cast up mire and dirt; he who holds fast to integrity will outride the elements; for the glorious promise still remains that truth will never die. Her enemies may flourish for a season, but the lovers of righteousness, purity and justice will rise above the ruins like the flowers upon the bleak desolations of winter.

It has been said that the only way to handle the devil is to steal his weapons. That will never get you anywhere, for his manufacturing plants are many and his supply would soon be replenished. The one and only way is to *kill* the devil and destroy his weapons. If you attempt simply to bind him, he will break the cords. Even though he be an old man, a death blow is the only thing that will eliminate him.

The Mountain of Holiness that a Christian has been called to ascend is not just a slippery slope on which there is no solid place short of the bottom, but the mountain has many good footholds, and, if one watches his step, he shall at last reach the summit.

A gift of \$50,000 from a rich man received the applause of the multitudes, but the music of the widow's

mite rose to heaven. God calls one a cheerful giver who surrenders his life to the service of our Master.

Ofttimes God is blamed for much of the misery that has fallen to humanity. Let us remember we cannot expect God to change His laws. He will not keep a ship off the rocks when the mariner has missed his reckonings and has not followed his chart. We cannot trust God to save a train when the engineer runs past his signals, nor will He save us when the auto is traveling at an excessive speed and a red light fails to stop us. We cannot look to God to keep us in health when we break the laws of nature. We cannot count upon Him to make our children over into new creatures, if we neglect their education and religious training.

History is strewn with many a wrecked civilization and men have gone about to build again; but when Christ comes to pour out His judgments and the sickle is thrust in to gather the harvest, man shall never build again on his own foundation. The ages shall have reached their vintage. God's long sought Kingdom shall have come.

#### Today — Watch for the Signs

Some may call us radical and pessimistic in this day and hour when the kingdoms of men are rocking at their base and the social structure of modern civilization is strained to a breaking point with moral and political decay; a day when vice has opened its flood-gates of iniquity and a thousand streams of pollution are sweeping away every remnant of moral principle, and men and women are throwing aside the unadulterated joys of virtue for the short-lived pleasures of vice and immorality. But on the morrow they shall be startled by the voice of the angel, proclaiming, "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come"; on the morrow they will come from the ends of the earth and admit it is they who have inherited lies and things of no profit.

Humanity stands in deadly fear of the atomic weapons that have come forth from the scientific workshops with power sufficient to annihilate all mankind. The stars by which men have steered their course are being blotted out; the horizon everywhere is threatening, bringing dread to the serious-minded. We should not be slow to recognize the great signs of Christ's coming. The Judge standeth at the door. God will not delay for a single hour His coming Judgment, that terrible destruction. It will come, whether men wake, sleep, neglect, or consider. To the faithful it will come as a welcome and long-looked-for deliverance. "Ye are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief," saith the beloved Apostle Paul.

Men may laugh at our confidence, and pity our fanaticism, as they regard it, but they themselves are the objects of pity. They are blind to what God has purposed and will be victims of a helpless terror when God's divine vengeance breaks forth upon the world and sweeps away the whole system of godless comfort in which they repose. But what of us who were appointed to be that porter and watch for the dawning of that auspicious Day? Shall we be found drinking with the drunken and slumbering at our post instead of sanctifying ourselves today, so tomorrow we may behold the great things God will do for us? When the storm is over, the saints will issue forth to bless the world with peace.

### Today — Work like Bees

An idle man or woman stands outside of God's plan. Let the coming days find us working like bees to collect all the honey within our reach, leaving God to order just what to do with it. It is too late in the day to become weary. "If thou hast run with footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and, if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" We can do nothing, for on the morrow, when we reach her shores, there will be none there to part the waters and let us pass.

The recollection of our peace and joy through the past year will show us how beneficent Jehovah has been to us, filling our days with a multitude of blessings. He has given us bountifully and liberally. God forbid we should be of that class who are so ungrateful as to pass over the kind allotments bestowed upon us by our loving Father. What have we been doing with the armor the Captain of our salvation has given us, the helmet, the shield, the breastplate, the sandals and the sword? Have we been putting them on in our daily battle against sin and wrong, or have we laid them aside and let the sword of the spirit become so rusty that with us it is losing its keen edge because we have become so lazy, weak-kneed and feeble-handed that we have forgotten how long a time it has been since we last wielded it? Pray, what power has the greatest army on earth if it fails to use its weapons? Let us not forget we are still on the march and the enemy before us.

### Today — Pray Without Ceasing

One of the greatest secrets of Christ's life was prayer. Let it be ours. "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." He who rises from prayer should come forth a better man in the great rush of our turbulent life. The secret of praying enables the Christian to get a new grip

on himself and see a new perspective around the work God has called him to perform. Prayer is the first, second and third element of a godly life. Let it open, accompany and conclude each day. The soul at early morning should take a draught at the heavenly fountain. It will sweeten the taste for the day. A few moments with God at that tranquil season are far more valuable than silver and gold; and if we tarry so sweetly at the throne, we shall come out of the closet covered over with the heavenly fragrance of that communion. If we would have God hear our prayer, we must hear Him when He speaks. He stops His ears against those who stop hearing His law. Let us draw out our soul to the needy; sow beside all waters, and forget not to deal our bread to the hungry; undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free; bring the poor that are cast out to our house; and when we see the naked, hurry to clothe them with the robe of righteousness. While carrying out all these acts of loving-kindness, let us not hide from our own flesh. Then our light shall break forth speedily and our righteousness will go before us. When at last we reach the river, the waters will part for us and we shall enter that Promised Land where time is not counted by years.

Today is for toil and achievement,  
Tomorrow will labor be past,  
Today the race running with patience,  
Tomorrow, the guerdon at last.

Today are the care and the conflict,  
Tomorrow the end of them all!  
Today in the field and the vineyard,  
Tomorrow the Master will call.

Today is the cross and the burden,  
Tomorrow, how sweet will be rest!  
Today to obey without question,  
Tomorrow, to learn all was best.

Today, waiting our Lord's appearing,  
Tomorrow, His coming proclaim.  
Today, the fort valiantly holding,  
Tomorrow, in glory to reign.

Lo, the sunbeam kissed the dewdrop  
On the petal of a rose,  
And, behold, the garden's beauty  
All at once it did disclose.  
There, displayed in shining likeness  
On its tiny crystal orb,  
Was reflected scenes of morning  
As the sunlight it absorbed.

It was pure, clean and shining  
As it lay there in the sun,  
Not one atom did pollute it,  
Trace of earth's dross it had none;  
There it glistened in the sunlight  
As the day still warmer grew,  
Till the rays again did lift it  
Toward the sun, to start anew.

Do we also, like the dewdrop,  
Catch the sunlight of God's love?  
As we live here in His garden,  
Do we reflect things above?  
Is our heart as clear as crystal,  
With no taint of earth nor sin?  
Do we mirror back the sunshine;  
Are we pure and clean within?

## Heavenly Sunlight

Let's receive Truth's righteous sunlight  
Till it fills and floods the soul,  
Ridding us of all uncleanness  
And we be found pure and whole.  
Then perchance we meet a stranger  
Who would tread this pilgrim way,  
We can lend a gleam of courage;  
It will brighten up his day.

If no word can then be spoken,  
We can still show forth His love;  
For a smile sincere and beaming  
Can turn thoughts to things above.  
For that trav'ler weary, saddened,  
May be strengthened in the way,  
And may catch the hope and gladness;  
Then rush on to that bright Day.

As we shine forth in His wisdom  
Saving others from a fall,  
We shall find the greatest profit,  
In our own gain, after all.  
Let's be patient, kind, obedient,  
Hating every taint of sin,  
Till the Father sees our beauty  
And we're acceptable to Him.

As life's little day advances,  
If we've kept in that bright ray,  
Like the dewdrop we'll be gathered  
To start anew another day.  
But that glad new Day we'll enter  
Ne'er shall cease nor have an end;  
We shall mingle with companions  
Gleaming bright, and pure within.

Health and happiness forever,  
Pleasures, honor, riches, too,  
Endless day shall be our portion;  
Beauty, pow'r and strength anew.  
Shining as the stars forever,  
With no need for natural sun;  
For with light of life we'll glitter:  
Endless Day shall have begun.

—T. M. T.

# Pressing On!



"in perils of robbers . . ."

## SCENE II

*In the first scene of the drama, we looked in upon a casual group of travelers at Milo's Tavern, on the Appian Way. This is at the town of Tres Tabernae, or Three Taverns, where PAUL was met by brethren on his first journey to Rome. It is a stormy night.*

*A sea captain, a Greek contractor, a Roman salesman, a centurion, the landlord, and the porter talk of the storm raging outside, which leads to reminiscences of the voyage in which PAUL was wrecked on Malta, our captain having been master of that ill-fated ship. Inevitably there follows a brisk discussion of the personality of PAUL and the Christian movement in general.*

*Rumor has it that the Apostle has been released after two years' house arrest. There is also a more ominous report that the Emperor Nero is about to move against the Christians, making them the scapegoat for the recent disastrous fire in Rome.*

*In Scene II there is a flashback of six months, and we see the great missionary "in his own hired house," guarded by a soldier, who sits in a corner, uncomprehending and silent. PAUL wears a light chain attached to his wrists. The furnishings are simple: a table, chairs, and a lampstand.*

*PAUL, his hair and beard now quite gray, is seated across the table from LUCIUS, a richly-dressed young Roman patrician, a convert to the Way. The young man's face is serious, even sad; the two men are in earnest conversation. The problem is*

### AMBITION AND PERSONAL SACRIFICE.

PAUL. You ran well for a season, Lucius; what is the hindrance now?

LUCIUS. It is just this, sir: the Way is narrow, but I expected that. It contains discipline, but as a Roman I can take that and welcome it. But it also calls for a great deal of sacrifice.

PAUL. Can you not also make that? It is only a matter of exchanging the poorer for the better.

LUCIUS. I know we are supposed to look at it that way, but is it? Try as I will, I can't avoid the question, Is it really worth it?

PAUL. [Quickly, with deep conviction] It is worth anything, if we look to the end. What is it you find so difficult to give up, my son?

LUCIUS. It is the things I have—or can have . . . and that is where it hurts. A man can willingly give up the things he does not have and is not likely to have. The poor can renounce money, but I have it. The unpopular can give up the friends they do not have, but I have hosts of them—or did have until I became a Christian. The incapable and uneducated can easily turn their backs on ambition, but I have education, I have talent, I know I can make money. I have been offered a government post which has a brilliant future, if I will conform to the State religion at least outwardly. The obscure have no such problems. The old can resist the lure of opportunity, for

their lives are behind them, but I am young; everything is ahead of me.

PAUL. In other words, you figure that this thing hits you harder than it does most people.

LUCIUS. Well, to be truthful, yes.

PAUL. Look, Lucius, whatever you do, don't ever start feeling sorry for yourself. It's the very worst thing you can do. Now I don't blame you for counting the cost. That is just what our Lord told us to do. But don't get the idea that you are being charged a higher price just because you have it. You don't know the other man's problems and the sacrifices he makes. Where much is given, much is required, and where little is given, little is required; but it all adds up to the same total—your all. The poor widow who cast in her two mites made more of a sacrifice than the rich who kept something for themselves, for she gave all she had. Much or little, the Way calls for a full surrender, a complete sacrifice. It's a challenge. If you can't go through with it, don't start. I thought you were man enough to measure up to the task, Lucius; don't make me mistaken.

LUCIUS. But what do we get in return?

PAUL. The disciples asked that question, and you remember what Jesus answered?

LUCIUS. Yes . . . a hundredfold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting. But that was spoken to fishermen and peasants, men who had nothing—no possessions and no prospects.

PAUL. That's what you think. Remember what I told you, that all things are relative. It was their all they left, and though it was little it was as precious to them as your all is to you.

Now let's look at your problems one by one. You have money. That's good, if you make the right use of it. Money brings its own problems. To many—and you have known them—it has been a curse. I, too, came from a well-to-do family, and for my change of heart I was disinherited. Yet I survived the blow, and have managed to make a living with my hands, which wouldn't hurt you if you had to do it. And I also learned the lesson to give money its proper place in life, but no more. There are many things it cannot give, as you will learn to your sorrow as you grow older, if you put your trust in it.

You have talent and ability. That is good. The church needs you. Is it not better to burn yourself out in such a Cause as this than to waste your talents in the vain pursuit of pleasure and worldly honor, which so soon pass away? Is it not better to live for Christ and for others—

LUCIUS. [reverently] As you are doing.

PAUL. [with rapt enthusiasm] As I find my highest pleasure in doing, or striving to do. To me, the Christian



life has been more than rewarding. I wouldn't for the world go back to the old, selfish way of life if I could . . . and I could. I could compromise and perhaps gain my freedom, but what would I gain in the long run?

You have had popularity, and could have it again; but what is more fickle than popularity? I know it exhilarates the old man and feeds the vanity, but how long does it last? Who has more popularity than Nero's favorites, but where are they? Who is the favorite of today? Who of yesterday? They change so fast one can hardly learn their names before they are gone. Is that the kind of popularity you crave? For my part, I prefer the approval of God and of Jesus Christ and the angels, and the fellowship of God's children on earth.

You have position. So had I. I was an honor student under the great Rabban Gamaliel. That doesn't mean anything to you, but to a Jew it does. I was in line for a seat in the Sanhedrin, the highest council of the Jews. My prospects were bright. I was already a leader of the most radical and violent faction of the Pharisees, so violent that I persecuted the Church of Christ. But when I saw my awful mistake, I turned my back on it all and became in their eyes as the offscouring of all creation. Why? Because I believed that Christ would give me much more, far higher honors, honors that will be everlasting. The new prospect was so far ahead of the old that I chose the better.

LUCIUS. I wish I could have some of your faith.

PAUL. I much more, Lucius. I wish I could give it to you, but every man must develop his own faith and work out his own salvation. I can only point you to the evidence.

You have youth. So had I. I was young when I entered the Way, and I praise God for the early start I made. He has done so much for me, my only regret is that I have only one lifetime to give Him. But you will find, as I have, that youth will not last. It gets away with breathless speed, and then where are you? What have you done with the years? Have you been just a successful Roman, or have you built a noble character worthy of being carried over into the world to come?

LUCIUS. [*rising*] But I also have my people to think of. I shrink from hurting them. The family name, and all that sort of thing, you know. Ours is a proud family.

PAUL. I had the same problem, perhaps even more so, for nowhere is the family tie and family pride stronger than among the Jews. But consider, as I did. This is a matter of life and death—for us, personally and individually. It is every man for himself. When death comes, to them or to you, what can your people do for you? Can they give you life beyond the grave? Can they give you eternal health and happiness?

LUCIUS. [*thoughtfully*] I see. It seems to be all a matter of present or future values.

PAUL. Exactly. According to your faith, be it unto you. Who are our true relatives? What did Jesus say? "Who-soever shall do the will of my Father, the same is my mother, and sister, and brother." It is a family which never fails or disappoints you. I have found it a better way; you can find it so, too.

LUCIUS. [*with a sigh*] It is not an easy decision—for me, at least. Perhaps I can work it out, with your help. . . . But I have wondered what I would do if persecution should arise. Anything can happen nowadays. Could I stand the disgrace, the physical tortures, perhaps a violent death? It's a question we may have to face some day, and I don't know . . .

PAUL. Very true, Lucius. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, in some form. But we all face death in some form and at some time. Rome honors its soldiers who suffer and die so that some corrupt politicians may gain power and a few landlords be

enriched. Those who have fallen never know of their honors. But for the soldiers of Jesus Christ who suffer for their faith, even to death, the glory will be theirs to enjoy for ever and ever. What is a moment of suffering and scorn when we know that God and the angels are watching? It is a prospect which I face far more immediately than you [*holds up his chain*], and from which I cannot escape. Yet as I look back over my life and consider the glorious prospect ahead, I ask myself, Where is the sacrifice? All this—and the Kingdom, too?

[*He places his arm around the young man's shoulders affectionately as the curtain falls.*]

Next issue: HOPELESSNESS.

## CRITICISM

A WRITER states: "Sadly must it be confessed that our age is harsh in its judgment, cruel in its criticism, and brutal in its blaming."

This is not a peculiarity of any age or race or nation. It was ever thus, because human nature is critical—of others, that is.

How much valuable time is spent in judging, criticizing and discussing the faults of our fellow men! Let us ask, How much do we contribute? So engrossed are we in the shortcomings of our brother that we are entirely oblivious to our own. So utterly horrible and innumerable appear the faults of those around us that we are led to exclaim in words of the Pharisee, "Thank God that I am not as other men!"

What, pray, is the value of our much criticism? Feelings are built up, unkind thoughts arise, and precious moments which should be spent in examining self are being wasted.

How much progress would be made if we could learn to be rigorous in judgment of ourselves, and gentle in judgment of our neighbor! If we would try to remedy a fault, kindness works best with others, sternness with ourselves. It is easy to make allowances for our own faults, and so difficult to make allowances for others. We have a high opinion of ourselves; the dust for others, but the sky for self.

Let us hear what Paul has to say concerning this matter. He seems to have the real answer for the subject. "If we must be critical, let us be critical of our own conduct" (Rom. 14:13, Phillips). And Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount exclaims, "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

We can judge others only by what we hear and see, but in criticising ourselves we have the whole mind before us, our thoughts, motives, feelings, purposes and ideals in life, the real facts which cannot be seen by our associates but which are an open book to the Almighty and by which we shall be judged. Therefore, the sphere of personal criticism is infinitely larger and infinitely more vital, for it is only through self-criticism and the self-improvement which must follow, that we shall ever be permitted to see the Elysian fields of bliss.

## Chain Reaction

**D**URING the middle of the present century, one of the smallest things in the universe became the greatest as a topic of world concern. The importance of the atom grew in inverse ratio to its tiny size. Scientists have explained that atomic energy—for uses destructive and creative—is released by “chain reaction.” This term is further explained as a reaction, either ordinary or nuclear, yielding energy or products which cause further reactions of the same kind, and so becoming self-sustaining.

Chain reactions are not limited to physics and chemistry. They occur in the chemistry of the mind and individual behavior, for good or for evil. Men and women—atom-size in the concept of the universe—are capable of releasing individual influence that may reach hundreds of other lives and for years to come.

We have had, also in this twentieth century, a striking example of the vast amount of destructiveness that could be attributed to the unleashing of a few men's evil propensities, causing chain reactions that multiplied and expanded until they reached two wars of world-wide proportions. The reaction starts from minute beginnings. Selfishness and greed begin in individual hearts. They spread to others, affecting first, families, then communities, then states, countries, groups of nations, and finally, the entire world is involved.

We all know of examples of the power of evil influence, how quickly it can spread! Unfortunately, an evil influence often has a more powerful effect on weak human nature than a good influence—the demagogue who stirs up the people for selfish ends; the fanatic religious leader who deceives the people with false hopes; the rebel leader stirring up strife against a wise and good government. In this connection we read in the Word of the case of the ten messengers sent to spy out the land of Canaan; their cowardice caused them to bring a false report to Moses and led thousands of the people to rebel against God and their leader, with disastrous consequences.

Every deed and act of our lives, in fact the whole of our lives, is one long constant reaction to our environment. We express a definite reaction to everything with which we come in contact: education, religion, government, neighbors, financial affairs, and even the weather.

Take, for example, the leaders of our governments: their decisions greatly affect our lives. They may so rule that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives, or they have the power to plunge us into the greatest misery—war.

When the mighty God sent His Son to teach His followers the way to life, and above all to be an example to them, He used the same principle of influence and reaction. It has been said that the life of Jesus has influenced more people for good throughout the centuries than have all other leaders combined. There is no record of Jesus being the author of any book, but He wrote on the hearts and lives of people. He left no strongly organized group—only a handful of faithful apostles to continue His work; but He left behind Him something more lasting, more valuable, more powerful than any material thing could ever be—His influence. Try as determinedly as they would, the enemies and ruling powers of that day

could not destroy the influence of Jesus. The example of that one Man alone started a chain reaction that spread and continued through the centuries to our day, and will continue into eternity.

We, of course, are well acquainted with the great characters of the Bible, and honor them for their noted achievements and their wonderful example of faith and works. But there is a character mentioned in the Book of Ruth, who, while she is not acclaimed for any special deed as is her daughter-in-law, yet by her outstanding example deserves a place of high honor. It is the mother-in-law, Naomi. She not only taught her two daughters-in-law the true and living way, but she must have lived according to what she proclaimed, or she would never have gained their respect and love. No doubt they were well acquainted with her everyday life and character. Naomi's wonderful example so inspired the young women, that they, or at least Ruth, gladly and willingly gave up her idol-worshipping people, and desired only to live and die with her beloved and respected mother-in-law. What a credit and honor to Naomi! We can safely draw the conclusion that it was the elder woman's upright life and example that caused Ruth to make her famous decision to forsake all and follow her to Bethlehem, there to live and die; but, above all, to worship the true God.

Ruth's decision, in turn, began a line of God-fearing descendants, reaching through four generations, to the great King David. But after David the chain was broken by Solomon's bad example which influenced many of the succeeding kings.

We are constantly influenced by the words and actions of our associates and we, in turn, are influencing them by our attitudes, thus establishing chain reactions that spread and lengthen for good or evil. Because an eternity of life or death is involved, the command is frequently given to watch—that our conduct is such that it produces a favorable reaction in all with whom we come in contact; especially those younger in the faith, that we do not cause them to stumble by some petty besetment of ours to which we are prone. It may be the indulgence of a little foolishness, backbiting, bitterness, impatience, haughtiness; being too proud to acknowledge a transgression, self-justification, and many other faults. We must also watch carefully to see that another's influence does not lead us down to destruction. It is so natural to think that if so-and-so can do this or that, then we can too! But no, an atom of sin is wrong no matter by whom committed, and it is a great mistake to follow the bad example of one who happens to have a good reputation.

For most of us, it is not our privilege to wield the power nor exert the influence of the worthy leaders of past ages, but we can all be Naomis in our small sphere of activity; so conduct ourselves that the Truth within us will shine out so that all those whose lives touch ours may see our good works, and wish to follow our example. What a rich heritage the great cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 11) has left us by the influence of their example of faith and good works! It is our duty to continue the golden chain they have forged, that we, too, by our example may leave a rich legacy of spiritual values to others.



## CLIMBING TO GREATER HEIGHTS

**C**OMPETING for a place in the warm sunshine causes a continual struggle in the plant world. Most plants thrive in the sunlight and will bend every effort to contact the sun's rays. Especially is this true of the clinging vines. They are tenacious, persistent and dogged in their determination to reach upward out of the shade and toward the sun.

The wisteria is just such a climbing vine. It fights for a place in the sun and will not give up. It entwines around pillar and post, winding and wrapping itself around anything that will serve its purpose to rise higher and higher. When other vines attempt to crowd in, the wisteria is master of the situation by squeezing and choking out her enemies, lest they destroy her.

In order to climb to any great height in the natural, there has to be effort and a struggle. Many people lose their lives struggling to reach the top of some great mountain, but not so in the spiritual. If struggling for a place in God's eternal home, we have the promise of sufficient time in this life to reach our goal, also angelic protection, that is, so long as we put to good use every minute of the time allotted us.

Our Lord Jesus was a noble vine and climbed to perfection in just a few short years. He said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." He acknowledged that the Heavenly Father was greater than He, and in all things He sought to please Him alone. By always rising above earthly things, He became a pattern for us to follow in our upward struggle. He took fast hold of instruction and did not let go, but rose higher and higher. Our aim, too, must be to become a part of that true vine, a part of Christ the Truth. Jesus included us, also, when He said, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

We are not a part of the true vine unless we are constantly at work crucifying the carnal nature and growing spiritually in act, thought and deed. As we remain in the vine, we become a part of that new man, the truth and the light. We will have less and less confidence in the carnal mind as we climb to higher ground. There will be more and more thirst after righteousness. We will take delight in bearing more of the fruits of the spirit, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness and kindness.

As the vine fights for its place in the sun, we too must struggle and fight for our place in the sunlight of God's holiness. God's ways and thoughts are much higher than ours; therefore we cannot reach God's standard in one stride. It is a slow progress, step by step and hand over hand, climbing and reaching higher and higher.

Like the vine, we have enemies to fight. The most destructive are the vines of sin. They sap and strangle life from everything they touch. Let us cling tightly to the Pillar of Truth and let us do the crowding. Let us crowd and choke out all sin-vines, the vines of anger, impatience, pride and sensitiveness. Insignificant and trivial though these sin-vines may seem at the start, if tolerated in any degree, they gain strength and in the end will destroy us eternally.

The most killing vine is evil thoughts. Conquer the evil thought and there will be no evil deed. As the wisteria reaches maturity, its fibers toughen and harden into wood. That is what we must do—harden and toughen against sin and temptation. When we reach maturity we shall be past yielding to sin in any form or manner. Basking in the sunlight of God's love, we will then bear the lovely fruits of the spirit to perfection.

One step and then another, and the longest walk is ended;  
One stitch and then another, and the largest rent is mended;  
One brick upon another, and the highest wall is made;  
One flake upon another, and the deepest snow is laid.

Then do not look disheartened o'er the work you have to do,  
And say that such a mighty task you never can get through,  
But just endeavor day by day, another point to gain,  
And soon the mountain which you feared will prove to be a plain.

## Thanks to the COMPASS

AN EXPERIENCE ON THE  
GULF OF MEXICO



**F**OR three days we have had dense fog on the water. It came up Thursday afternoon when wife and I were out fishing. We had to come in with our compass, as one could see only a very short distance in any direction, and there was no sign of the sun. We were probably about two miles from shore when entirely enveloped by this dense fog. Not once did either of us express our ideas as to which way to go, but constantly kept our eyes on the compass with wife holding the compass and I inquiring, "Am I steering right?" By following our compass constantly, we landed shortly on familiar land within a quarter of a mile of our dock. But needless to say, we were concerned.

The Word of God is a sure and unfailing compass furnished the Christian mariner over life's sea. It will direct safely through the "densest fog," the "heaviest weather," the lowest visibility conditions, if we will trust in the Lord with all our heart and lean not to our own understanding (Prov. 3:5, 6).

If we were so concerned over following a compass to gain a few short years, how many more million times we should be concerned with following a compass that will gain for us billions of times more life with joys beyond all that we can ask or think!

## A CORRECTION

Through an oversight in the obituary notice of Sister Lucy Cogswell (last issue), we failed to mention all her survivors. They are one son, Arnold Cogswell of West Branch, N. Y.; two daughters, Mrs. Russell Fey and Mrs. Gerald Urtz, both of West Leyden; her mother, Mrs. Jacob Fey, of West Leyden; three brothers, Elmer Fey, Victor Fey, and Lester Fey, of West Leyden; two sisters, Mrs. Belva Burnett and Mrs. Erna Freeman; five grandchildren; several nieces and nephews.

# Meditations

## On the Word

*"We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification" (Romans 15: 1, 2).*

A noble principle is couched in these words: "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." Jesus Himself showed the example. His life showed interest in others. He gladly sacrificed for others. Whereas He possessed the caliber to have filled a high station in the world, with multitudes acclaiming His glory, yet He chose to live for others, to give His life in self-effacement, to accept poverty, privation, the ill speeches, and practiced His own maxim: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Now Christ is our pattern, He is our standard, the great example whose towering stature we should strive to imitate. And in doing this we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not try to please ourselves. It is a temptation to the strong to look down upon the weak. We are tempted to view our less robust brother as weak-kneed, low in initiative, afraid to take a step, inclined to make mountains of molehills. Yet we we cannot evaluate them; we do not know his problems, may be totally in the wrong. Not knowing his weaknesses, we cannot compare his strength with our own.

The superiority complex is something that plagues many human beings. Comparison of one's own strength with another's weakness makes that strength appear much stronger. It is enhancing, hence is pleasing to self. But such pleasure is forbidden. We cannot please ourselves. The Divine command is: "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification." This demand leaves no room for self-gratification.

In analyzing the term "neighbor," we could easily get the wrong meaning. The person or family whose dwelling adjoins our own could properly be styled our neighbor. Yet this definition does not seem to provide just the right meaning. Our near neighbor might not even be a Christian, he might be one we could not please, however hard we tried. He might not be the type of person that we could please without stooping to ungodly actions.

An enlightening thought on the "neighbor" is found in Lev. 19: 17, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." The brother is the neighbor, and the neighbor the brother. Specifically it is the brother in the faith, the person who is trying to live right, striving to qualify for a son of God, as we ourselves are.

Usually a man is pleased when given his own way and not restrained from doing the things he naturally likes to do. But, knowing the human tendency to evil, that could not be the kind of pleasing Paul recommended in our meditation text. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: . . . so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5: 17). "The way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10: 23).

A pat on the back and the assurance that he is a good fellow would please our neighbor, but that should not be construed as pleasing him for his good to edification. That would be flattery, and "a man that flattereth his neighbor spreadeth a net for his feet" (Prov. 29: 5). Such geniality is not for his good; it is harmful.

Nothing pleases a man more than for someone to agree with him. But if in the wrong and you agree with him, you do him a distinct disservice; you do him incalculable injury, and displease God by doing it. "Shouldest thou help the ungodly . . . ? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord" (II Chron. 19: 2). You are building him up in that which runs counter to the will of God, encouraging the wicked not to turn from his wicked way "by promising him life."

It pleases a man to give him more credit than he is due. The fact that the picture is overdrawn usually doesn't bother him at all, he can easily overlook the error in his favor. Men always are pleased when they receive honor one from another; but such honor does not edify. Jesus said: "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" The honor God gives will truly be a favor to every one who receives it. But to deserve that honor a man must be genuine, he must actually have built up for himself credits entitling him to honor. He will have faith and endurance; he will have loyalty to the Cause of the Eternal. He will have steadfastness of purpose. He will be willing always to exchange error for truth, his thoughts and ways for God's ways and thoughts. He will be humble, self-effacing, generous, ready to do for others as he would be done by.

It pleases men and women to tell them that salvation can be obtained upon such easy terms that they can pass their days in ignorance of God's Word; that they can lead any type of life that agrees with their fancy, and still be saved, provided that in an emergency they have time to call on God for mercy and accept Christ as their personal Saviour. But such a vain hope is nothing more than wishful thinking; it is a flight from reality, a snare and a delusion. God demands a flawless character, a "conscience void of offense."

The last phrase of Rom. 15: 2 states: "for his good to edification." Dr. Moffatt translates the last eight words: "doing him good by building up his faith." It requires watchfulness and extreme honesty of purpose always to work for our neighbor's good to build up his faith. According to the Apostle James, speech control is a sign of maturity in the divine life. Much is spoken that is not to edification. Some things may not be especially harmful, neither are they helpful. They do not edify. One can engage in conversation which is true; he may state that which is factual, and still not edify the listeners. One might discourse upon the rules governing horse racing, and prize fighting, or discuss the World Series, but such talk could not edify the Christian neighbor, or brother in the faith. The Psalmist expressed spiritual-mindedness when he said: "I will speak of the glorious majesty of his kingdom all the day long."

We should talk that which will build faith, encourage watchfulness, stimulate action, re-enforce the determination to do right. That is the kind of talk that should please our neighbor; and if he is truly a brother in the faith, he will be pleased.



# Your Questions Answered



## BIBLICAL PERSONAL CURRENT

Do you have a question? Personal replies to Biblical questions will be sent to any correspondent, and counsel will be offered on problems pertaining to the spiritual life. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will publish only the most helpful discussions for the benefit of other readers. No names shall be mentioned.

**Is it possible to sin so greatly against God now that He will not forgive?**

The Prophet Isaiah said: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." The issue rests wholly with us. God will forgive, but we must meet His requirements. Isaiah says more: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well" (chapter 1: 16—18; see also chapter 55: 6, 7). This is the basis of forgiveness and God's mercy. The Wise Man also spoke in like manner: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28: 13). No matter how grievous the offense, confess and forsake and God will pardon.

But it is possible to put off the day of our return to God until too late. (See Proverbs 1: 20—33; Jer. 30: 15). If you have wandered from God and wish to return, do it now. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6: 37).

**Does not Matthew 18: 20, which reads, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," indicate the presence of Christ on earth today and always?**

No. It is physically impossible for any living being to occupy two places at the same time. The disciples saw Christ ascend to heaven bodily. There He shall remain, His location specifically revealed to be at the Father's right hand (Acts 2: 32—35), until He returns to earth "in like manner" as He departed (Acts 1: 11), a living being, accompanied by angels.

The comfort which Jesus intended to convey in Matt. 18: 20 is that the spiritual Christ, the truth, is present at any gathering where true believers are assembled. How ever small the group that may be gathered, if the Word is exalted, then "I," truth, am in the midst of them. Jesus so thoroughly exemplified every principle of truth in His life that the terms "Christ," and "truth" are often used interchangeably. See Col. 1: 27; John 6: 51. In fact truth was recognized as "Christ" by the Children of Israel—before ever the birth of the personal Christ (1 Cor. 10: 1—4).

The Bible student must labor not to confuse the man Christ (1 Tim. 2: 5) with the truth which He proclaimed.

**Did Jesus promise salvation to the dying thief on the cross?**

Luke 23: 43, the verse in question, is wanting in many of the earliest manuscripts (2d century), and ignored by several of the early Church Fathers who might have been expected to cite it. (See footnote, Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott*.) However, if it is genuine, it does not promise salvation to the thief, for that would be a contradiction of the whole moral law, and specifically of the assurance of Paul that "neither thieves . . . nor revilers . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6: 10). This unsavory character was both a thief and a reviler (Matt. 27: 44).

Note that the thief did not ask to be taken to heaven that day, but to be remembered "when thou comest."

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Jesus answered him by a question: "Verily I say unto thee today, Shalt thou be with me in paradise?" A question can and often does have the force of a negative assertion, depending on the context, as in Genesis 4: 9, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The absence of punctuation is the fault of the translators; there is no punctuation in the original Greek. Jesus did not wait until His coming but informed the thief that his repentance had come too late.

If salvation were promised to the thief, and if death-bed repentance be possible, then such texts as Jer. 13: 16, 23 are meaningless, and we have anarchy in the Scriptures instead of harmony.

**If the Jews are God's chosen people, why are they scattered all over the world?**

God rejected the Jews as His chosen nation at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem (A. D. 70). Jesus foretold their dispersion and that Jerusalem would be held by gentiles until the end (Luke 21: 24). They are scattered world-wide because of their disobedience to God. Moses foretold this some 3,500 years ago. We read: "The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them; and you shall be a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. . . . And the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other; and there you shall serve other gods, of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known" (Deut. 28: 25, 64).

This is one of the fulfilled prophecies which show the truthfulness of God's word.

**Has Elijah been made immortal? If Jesus Christ was the firstfruits or the only one who has immortality, Elijah must be dead and will have to be raised before we shall ever see him.**

Elijah has not been made immortal, for of this Adamic race, "Christ only hath immortality" (1 Tim. 6: 16). Neither do we believe Elijah ever died, because Jesus tells us he is to come and restore all things (Matt. 17: 11); that is, he will restore the Holy Spirit power by which the dead shall be raised. The fact that angels bore him aloft leads us to believe his mortal life has been lengthened on some distant planet, even as the patriarchs of old enjoyed a much longer span of mortal life than is known today. It is God's promise, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4: 5).

**Will there be a third coming of Christ as some are teaching?**

The Apostle Paul plainly refers to the *Second Coming* (Heb. 9: 28), and there is abundant Scripture pertaining to His work at that time, but nowhere does the Bible tell of a third coming.

**Is the Book of Revelation history or prophecy?**

The greater part of the book is prophecy, speaking of Christ's coming, the reward of the faithful, the doom of world powers, Rome, Babylon, the beast, etc.; the transformation of the kingdoms of this world to become the Kingdom of our Lord. It also concerns the millennium and eternity. In the first chapter Jesus told the angels to write "the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."



## LYRIC OF ACTION

This poem exhorts us not to let the sense of past failure paralyze us from further effort. With a will that defies circumstance, we must break the fetters of fear and start afresh.

A vigorous start counts for much, but not for everything. A vigorous and courageous persistence, maintained amid discouragements and rebuffs, counts for infinitely more.

'Tis the part of a coward to brood  
O'er the past that is withered and dead:  
What though the heart's roses are ashes and dust?  
What though the heart's music be fled?  
Still shine the great heavens o'erhead,  
Whence the voice of an angel thrills clear on the soul,  
"Gird about thee thine armor, press on to the goal!"

If the faults or the crimes of thy youth  
Are a burden too heavy to bear,  
What hope can re-bloom on the desolate waste  
Of a jealous and craven despair?  
Down, down with the fetters of fear!  
In the strength of thy valor and manhood arise,  
With the faith that illumines and the will that defies.

"Too late!" through God's infinite world,  
From His throne to earth's furthestmost spires,  
"Too late!" is a phantom that flies at the dawn  
Of the soul that repents and aspires.  
If pure thou hast made thy desires,  
There's no height the strong wills of immortals have  
gained  
Which in striving to reach thou shalt strive for in vain.

Then, up to the contest with fate,  
Unbound by the past, which is dead!  
What though the heart's roses are ashes and dust?  
What though the heart's music be fled?  
Still shine the fair heavens o'erhead;  
And sublime as the seraph who rules in the sun  
Beams the promise of joy when the conflict is won!  
—*Sel. and alt.*

